

# Protecting pre-license teens from road risk : identifying risk-contributing factors and quantifying effects of intervention strategies

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## **Protecting pre-license teens from road risk**

Divera Twisk, 5 September 2014

1. In the Netherlands, adolescent road mortality is an underestimated public health problem. Young adolescents die almost as often from 'preventable' injuries as from 'incurable' disease (this dissertation).
2. Prevention of adolescent mortality need not only be directed toward risky behaviour, but should also target the safety of the road system, such as improving the safety of roads and cycle paths, and discouraging access to high risk modes of transport (this dissertation).
3. The suggestion that teen cognitions about the intentionality of risky road behaviour may fundamentally differ from adult cognitions may have great implications for the design of road safety education programmes (this dissertation).
4. The acquisition of complex skills requires intensive learning by doing, rather than simply learning by observation or by learning simple rules of thumb (this dissertation).
5. It is a lost opportunity and a waste of resources that risk behaviour among young adolescents is addressed by targeting a specific problem behaviour (e.g., smoking, drinking, drug taking, violence and petty crime, or road safety) and not by targeting the more general underlying characteristics that lead to these behaviours.
6. Concerning the special responsibility of schools in relation to the youngsters in their care, it is unethical that schools are allowed to use road safety education programmes for which the effects are unknown and potentially harmful.
7. Discontinuation of the Free Public Transport pass will result in a rise in road fatalities among young drivers and their passengers. These unintended side effects on road safety should be taken into account.

8. It is unacceptable that given the overall improvements in road safety, young males do not appear to benefit sufficiently from these safety gains.
9. In the past, the unsaturated need for speed has given us high-powered cars on motorways. More recently this unsaturated need has given us high-powered bicycles on bicycle tracks. In the world of thrills and profits, safety often is the least of concerns.
10. The potential contribution of applied behavioural sciences to public health is often undervalued.
11. Like a pilgrimage, a PhD track is an exercise in humility.